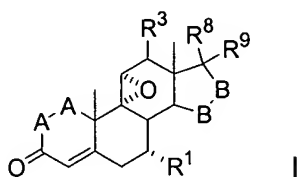


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

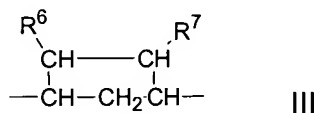
Claims 1-65. (cancelled).

Claim 66. (currently amended) A process for the formation of a compound of Formula I:



wherein -A-A- represents the group $-\text{CHR}^4-\text{CHR}^5-$ or $-\text{CR}^4=\text{CR}^5-$;

-B-B- represents the group $-\text{CHR}^6-\text{CHR}^7-$ or an alpha- or beta-oriented group of Formula III:



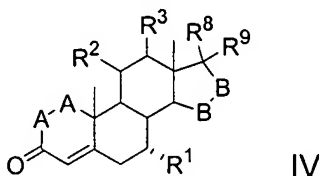
R^1 represents an α -oriented lower alkoxy carbonyl or hydroxycarbonyl radical;

R^3 , R^4 and R^5 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halo, hydroxy, lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxy carbonyl, cyano, and aryloxy;

R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halo, lower alkoxy, acyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxycarbonyl, alkyl, alkoxy carbonyl, acyloxyalkyl, cyano, and aryloxy; and

R^8 and R^9 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, halo, lower alkoxy, acyl, hydroxyalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, hydroxycarbonylalkyl, alkoxy carbonylalkyl, acyloxyalkyl, cyano, and aryloxy, or R^8 and R^9 together comprise a carbocyclic or heterocyclic ring structure, or R^8 or R^9 together with R^6 or R^7 comprise a carbocyclic or heterocyclic ring structure fused to the pentacyclic D ring;

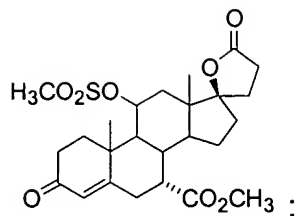
wherein said compound of Formula II is prepared by converting a compound of Formula IV to a compound of Formula II, said removing an 11 α -leaving group from a compound of Formula IV having the structure:



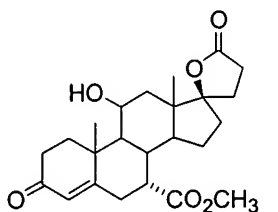
Claim 67. (cancelled)

The chemical structure shows a steroid nucleus with a methyl ester group (CO_2CH_3) at C-14 and a γ -butyrolactone ring fused at C-13 and C-14. The lactone ring is fused to the D-ring, with the ester oxygen at C-13 and the carbonyl group at C-14. The methyl ester group is attached to C-14 via a dashed bond, indicating it is on the same side as the lactone ring.

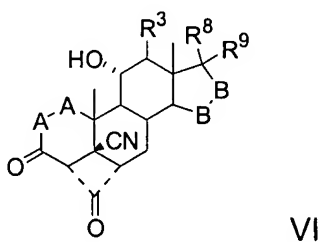
The chemical structure shows a steroid nucleus with a methyl ester group (CO_2CH_3) at C-3 and a cyclopentanone ring at C-17. The ester group is attached to the C-3 position with a dashed bond, indicating it is on the same side as the C-14 methyl group. The cyclopentanone ring is attached to the C-17 position with a solid wedge bond, indicating it is on the opposite side of the C-14 methyl group.



and said compound of Formula V is:



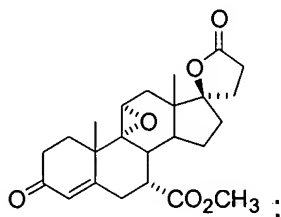
Claim 73. (currently amended) A process as set forth in claim 69 wherein the compound of Formula V is prepared by converting reacting a compound of Formula VI to a compound of Formula V with an alkali metal alkoxide corresponding to the formula $R^{10}OM$ wherein M is alkali metal and $R^{10}O$ corresponds to the alkoxy substituent of R^4 , said compound of Formula VI having the structure:



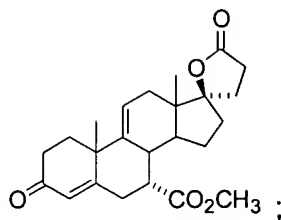
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , R^8 and R^9 are as defined in claim 69.

Claim 74. (cancelled)

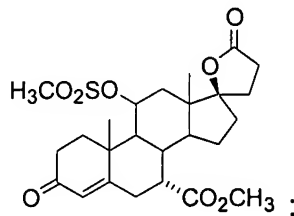
Claim 75. (previously presented) The process of claim 73 wherein said compound of Formula I is:



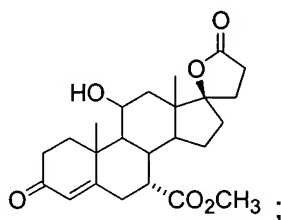
said compound of Formula II is:



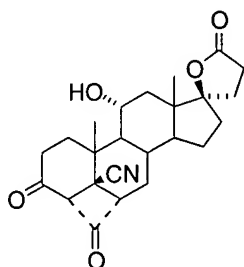
said compound of Formula IV is:



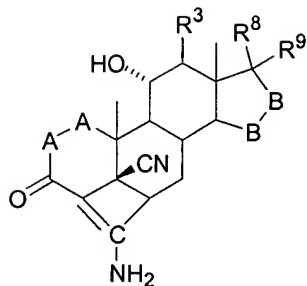
said compound of Formula V is:



and said compound of Formula VI is:



Claim 76. (currently amended) A process as set forth in claim 73 wherein the compound of Formula VI is prepared by converting hydrolyzing a compound of Formula VII to a compound of Formula VI, said compound of Formula VII having the structure:

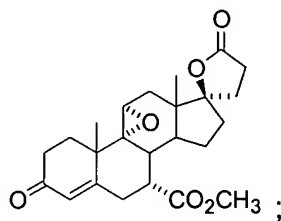


VII

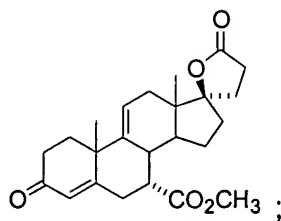
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , R^8 and R^9 are as defined in claim 73.

Claim 77. (cancelled)

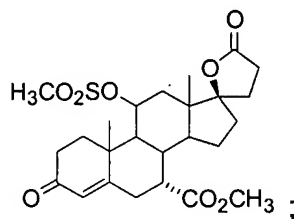
Claim 78. (previously presented) The process of claim 76 wherein said compound of Formula I is:



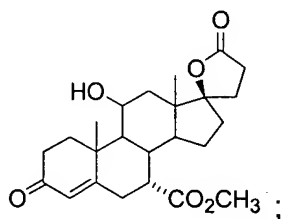
said compound of Formula II is:



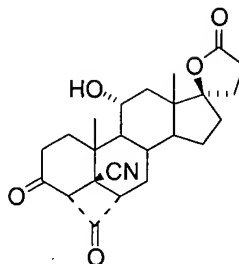
said compound of Formula IV is:



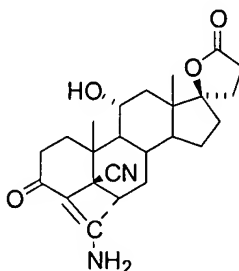
said compound of Formula V is:



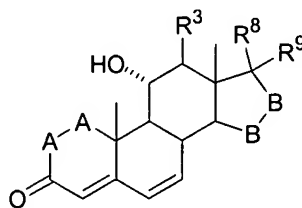
said compound of Formula VI is:



and said compound of Formula VII is:



Claim 79. (currently amended) A process as set forth in claim 76 wherein the compound of Formula VII is prepared by converting a compound of Formula VIII to a compound of Formula VII, said reacting a source of cyanide ion in the presence of an alkali metal salt with a compound of Formula VIII having the structure:

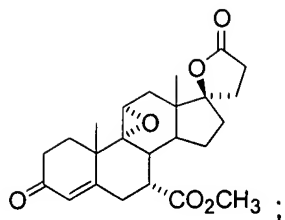


VIII

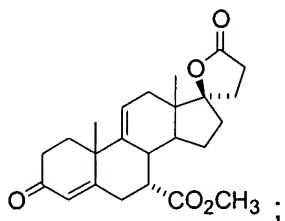
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , R^8 and R^9 are as defined in claim 76.

Claims 80. – 81. (cancelled)

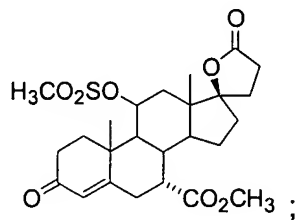
Claim 82. (previously presented) A process as set forth in claim 79 wherein said compound of Formula I is:



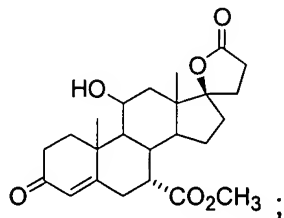
said compound of Formula II is:



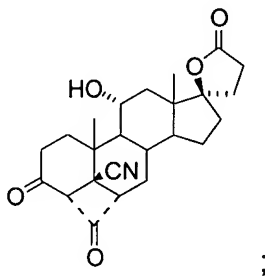
said compound of Formula IV is:



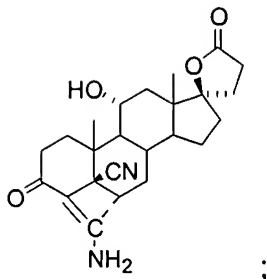
said compound of Formula V is:



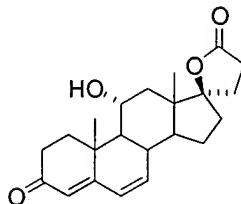
said compound of Formula VI is:



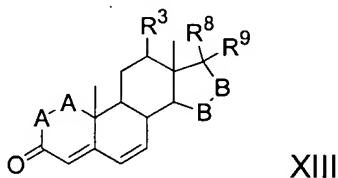
said compound of Formula VII is:



and said compound of Formula VIII is:



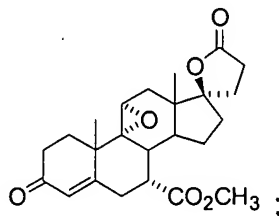
Claim 83. (currently amended) A process as set forth in claim 79 wherein the compound of Formula VIII is prepared by converting oxidizing a compound of Formula XIII to a compound of Formula VIII ~~by fermentation in the presence of a microorganism effective for introducing an 11-hydroxy group into said substrate in α -orientation~~, said compound of Formula XIII having the structure:



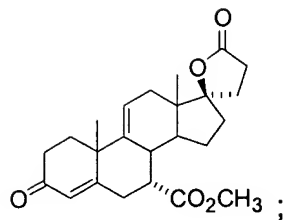
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R³, R⁸ and R⁹ are as defined in claim 79.

Claims 84. - 85 (cancelled)

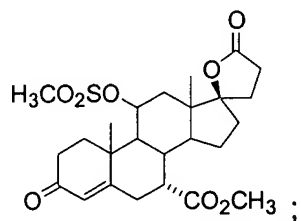
Claim 86. (previously presented) A process as set forth in claim 83 wherein said compound of Formula I is:



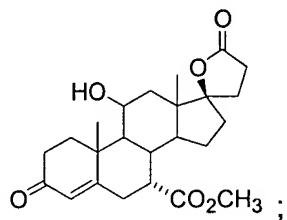
said compound of Formula II is:



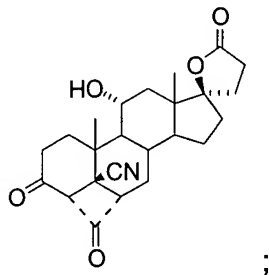
said compound of Formula IV is:



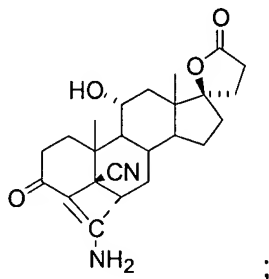
said compound of Formula V is:



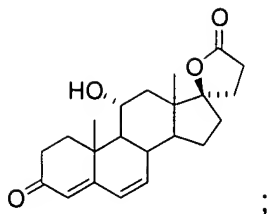
said compound of Formula VI is:



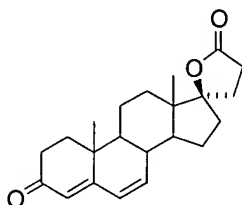
said compound of Formula VII is:



said compound of Formula VIII is:



and said compound of Formula XIII is:



Claims 87. – 93. (cancelled)

Claim 94. (new) A process as set forth in claim 66 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula II to a compound of Formula I is effected by contacting an epoxidizing reagent with a compound of Formula II.

Claim 95. (new) A process as set forth in claim 66 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula IV to a compound of Formula II is effected by removing an 11α -leaving group from a compound of Formula IV.

Claim 96. (new) A process as set forth in claim 69 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula V to a compound of Formula IV is effected by reacting a lower alkylsulfonylating or acylating reagent or a halide generating agent with a compound of Formula V.

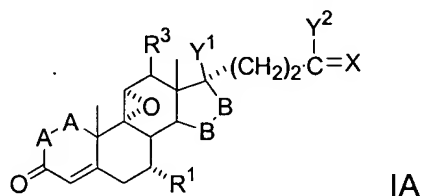
Claim 97. (new) A process as set forth in claim 73 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula VI to a compound of Formula V is effected by reacting a compound of Formula VI with an alkali metal alkoxide corresponding to the formula $R^{10}OM$ wherein M is alkali metal and $R^{10}O^-$ corresponds to the alkoxy substituent of R^1 .

Claim 98. (new) A process as set forth in claim 76 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula VII to a compound of Formula VI is effected by hydrolyzing a compound of Formula VII.

Claim 99. (new) A process as set forth in claim 79 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula VIII to a compound of Formula VII is effected by reacting a source of cyanide ion in the presence of an alkali metal salt with a compound of Formula VIII.

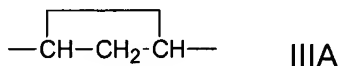
Claim 100. (new) A process as set forth in claim 83 wherein said conversion of a compound of Formula XIII to a compound of Formula VIII is effected by oxidizing a compound of Formula XIII by fermentation in the presence of a microorganism effective for introducing an 11-hydroxy group into said substrate in α -orientation.

Claim 101. (new) A process for the formation of a compound of Formula IA:



wherein -A-A- represents the group -CH₂-CH₂- or -CH=CH-;

-B-B- represents the group -CH₂-CH₂- or an alpha- or beta- oriented group of Formula IIIA:



R¹ represents an alpha-oriented lower alkoxy carbonyl radical;

X represents two hydrogen atoms or oxo;

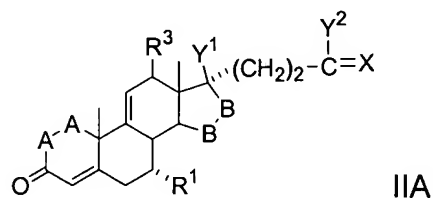
Y¹ and Y² together represent the oxygen bridge -O-, or

Y¹ represents hydroxy, and

Y² represents hydroxy, lower alkoxy or, if X represents H₂, also lower alkanoyloxy;

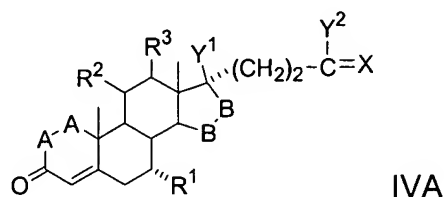
and salts of compounds in which X represents oxo and Y² represents hydroxy;

the process comprising converting a compound of Formula IIA to a compound of Formula IA, said compound of Formula IIA having the structure:



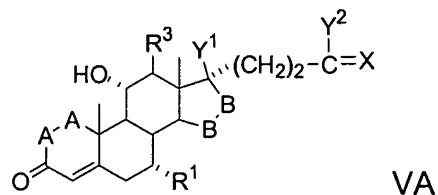
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R¹, R³, X, Y¹ and Y² are as defined above;

wherein said compound of Formula IIA is formed by converting a compound of Formula IVA to a compound of Formula IIA, said compound of Formula IVA having the structure:



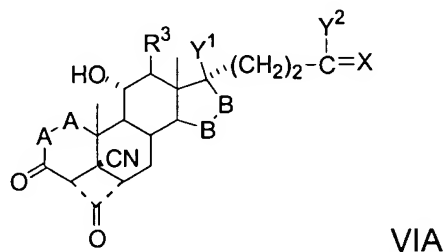
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R¹, R³, X, Y¹ and Y² are as defined above, and R² represents lower alkylsulfonyloxy or acyloxy;

wherein said compound of Formula IVA is formed by converting a compound of Formula VA to a compound of Formula IVA, said compound of Formula VA having the structure:



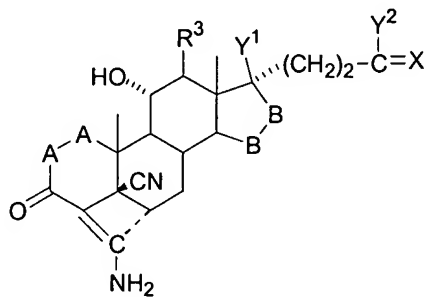
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R¹, R³, X, Y¹ and Y² are as defined above;

wherein said compound of Formula VA is formed by converting a compound of Formula VIA to a compound of Formula VA, said compound of Formula VIA having the structure:



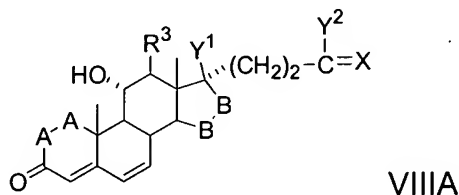
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , X, Y^1 and Y^2 are as defined above;

wherein said compound of Formula VIA is formed by converting a compound of Formula VIIA to a compound of Formula VIA, said compound of Formula VIIA having the structure:



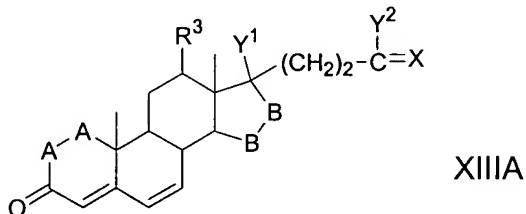
wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , X, Y^1 and Y^2 are as defined above;

wherein said compound of Formula VIIA is formed by converting a compound of Formula VIIIA to a compound of Formula VIIA, said compound of Formula VIIIA having the structure:



wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , X, Y^1 and Y^2 are as defined above;

wherein said compound of Formula VIIIA is formed by converting a compound of Formula XIII A to a compound of Formula VIIIA, said compound of Formula XIII A having the structure:



wherein -A-A-, -B-B-, R^3 , X, Y^1 and Y^2 are as defined above.